

## WOMEN TELL JUDGE OF MISHAPS WITH JEWELRY CLEANER

Four women followed one another into the witness box in the High Court yesterday to tell Mr. Justice McNair what happened when they used Couronne crown jewelry cleaner.

They were Lady Carrington, wife of the former Conservative Minister; Mrs. Janet Blood, of Hans Place, Belgravia, S.W.; Mrs. Gillian Elizabeth Warrender, of Brompton Square, Chelsea, S.W.; and Mrs. Rhoda Rebecca Ross, of Broomfield Road, Stanmore, Middlesex.

All gave evidence in support of the damages claimed against Harrods, Ltd., by Mrs. Patricia Fisher, wife of Mr. Nigel Fisher, M.P.

Lady Carrington, of Ovington Square, Chelsea, said she bought her bottle of the cleaner from Harrods in September, 1963.

She added: "I held it over the bowl and shook it twice, gently. I then gave very gentle pressure to see if the liquid would come out. As soon as I did that the stopper flew out and the liquid was all over my table and floor."

### 'IT BURST OUT'

Answering the Judge, Lady Carrington said she did not then know of the accident Mrs. Fisher had had with the cleaner. The liquid burnt away an area of French polish on the table, although she immediately fetched a cloth to wipe it up.

Cross-examined by Mr. Marven Everett, Q.C., for Harrods, Lady Carrington said: "The bung certainly did not fall out of the bottle. It burst out".

She did not tell Harrods and first heard of the accident to Mrs. Fisher when dining with the Fishers a long time afterwards.

Mrs. Blood said she bought her bottle from Harrods last year. She used the liquid to clean her jewelry successfully earlier in the year, opening the bottle with a pin in accordance with the instructions. A thin stream of the liquid came from the pinhole.

In December, when she decided to use the liquid again, she had heard through a friend of Mrs. Fisher's accident, and was very careful.

"Holding it close to the basin and far away from my face, I gently pressed the bottle and a small stream came out as before. Then in an instant there was what could only be described as an explosion", she went on.

"The plug, which I thought was an integral part of the bottle, shot out into the basin with all the liquid, causing such a

splash that it was thrown up. My glasses protected my eyes but liquid went on my lips; they burnt rather miserably. I rushed to the bath tap and doused my face with water."

Cross-examined, Mrs. Blood said she kept the cleaner on a shelf in her bathroom. "And that is a cool place, much to my regret", she said.

There was no "bang" as the liquid came out.

She used the word explosion to describe "tremendous pressure".

Mrs. Warrender said she bought her bottle from Harrods in the autumn of 1963. When she tried to squeeze the contents into a small bowl nothing happened.

She pierced the cap and squeezed but again nothing happened. "So I squeezed a little harder and the whole thing erupted", she said. "It all happened so quickly. I shut my eyes automatically. Some of the liquid went on my face and some on the carpet."

She had not complained to Harrods, she added, "but I wish I had".

Mrs. Ross said she bought a bottle of the liquid from Bourne and Hollingsworth last October. Because it had been opened and was half full, it was exchanged for a full bottle.

She and her small boy went to the store restaurant. She added: "While having my drink of tea I put the bottle on the table. I was about to turn the screw when it exploded in my face." She had not been well since.

### DEFENCE CASE

Mr. Daniel Donald Moir, an analytical chemist, of Reigate, Surrey, told the Court that he would not expect the cleaning liquid to be sold without a warning.

Pressure inside the bottle could be increased by the ammonia the liquid contained giving off gas, and could force the stopper out with a "terrific, explosive eruption". "I have seen it happen", he added. He thought it nonsense to suggest that the liquid dissolved nylon.

Because the fluid was an unfamiliar solution it should carry a warning about its properties and the fact that it should be kept away from the eyes.

Mr. Robin Dunn, Q.C., for Mrs. Fisher, said a bottle of the cleaner bought last December bore the instruction, "Keep away from the eyes".

Mr. Everett, opening Harrods' case, maintained that the only issue was whether they had done anything inconsistent with the behaviour of a reasonable shopkeeper.

The hearing was adjourned until today.

**Women Tell Judge Of Mishaps With Jewelry Cleaner.**

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